

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 31 and 33; and add new Claims 34-36 as follows.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A damper comprising:
 - a pressure tube;
 - a rod guide assembly closing a first end of said pressure tube;
 - an end cap closing a second end of said pressure tube, said rod guide assembly, said end cap and an inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube forming a sealed working chamber, said sealed working chamber being completely filled with a pressurized gas;
 - a solid piston rod disposed within said sealed working chamber, said solid piston rod defining a longitudinal axis and having a first end extending through said rod guide assembly;
 - a piston disposed within said sealed working chamber, said piston being attached to a second end of said solid piston rod, said piston slidably engaging said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube to divide a first portion of said sealed working chamber into an upper working chamber and a lower working chamber, said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas;
 - a first flow path extending through said piston to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber;

a valve body disposed within said sealed working chamber to define with said end cap and with said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube a fluid chamber located in a second portion of said sealed working chamber, said fluid chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas, said valve body being independent from said solid piston rod and fixedly secured to said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube; and

a second flow path extending through said valve body to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said lower working chamber and said fluid chamber, said second flow path being a continuously open flow path; wherein

said pressurized ~~[[fluid]]~~ gas within said sealed working chamber being the only component of said damper exerting a force on said piston in a direction generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of said piston rod when said piston is stationary within said pressure tube.

2.-5. (cancelled)

6. (original) The damper according to Claim 1, further comprising a compression valve assembly attached to said piston, said compression valve assembly prohibiting fluid flow from said upper working chamber to said lower working chamber.

7. (original) The damper according to Claim 6, further comprising an extension valve assembly attached to said piston, said extension valve assembly prohibiting fluid flow from said lower working chamber to said upper working chamber.

8. (withdrawn) The damper according to Claim 1, wherein said first flow path is an open flow path.

9.-27. (cancelled)

28. (previously presented) The damper according to Claim 1 wherein said second flow path is a tunable restriction.

29. (previously presented) The damper according to Claim 28 wherein said first flow path is a tunable restriction.

30. (previously presented) The damper according to Claim 1 wherein said first flow path is a tunable restriction.

31. (currently amended) A damper comprising:
a pressure tube;
a rod guide assembly closing a first end of said pressure tube;
an end cap closing a second end of said pressure tube, said rod guide assembly, said end cap and an inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube forming a sealed working chamber, said sealed working chamber being completely filled with a pressurized gas;

a solid piston rod disposed within said sealed working chamber, said solid piston rod having a first end extending through said rod guide assembly;

a piston disposed within said sealed working chamber, said piston being attached to a second end of said solid piston rod, said piston slidably engaging said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube to divide a first portion of said sealed working chamber into an upper working chamber and a lower working chamber, said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas;

a first flow path extending through said piston to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber;

a valve body disposed within said sealed working chamber to define with said end cap and with said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube a fluid chamber located in a second portion of said sealed working chamber, said fluid chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas, said valve body being independent from said solid piston rod and fixedly secured to said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube; and

a second flow path extending through said valve body to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said lower working chamber and said fluid chamber, said second flow path being a continuously open flow path; wherein

the pressurized ~~[[fluid]]~~ gas is the only biasing member disposed within said lower working chamber.

32. (previously presented) The damper according to Claim 31, wherein the pressurized fluid is the only biasing member disposed within said upper working chamber.

33. (currently amended) A damper comprising:

- a pressure tube;
- a rod guide assembly closing a first end of said pressure tube;
- an end cap closing a second end of said pressure tube, said rod guide assembly, said end cap and an inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube forming a sealed working chamber, said sealed working chamber being completely filled with a pressurized gas;
- a solid piston rod disposed within said sealed working chamber, said solid piston rod having a first end extending through said rod guide assembly;
- a piston disposed within said sealed working chamber, said piston being attached to a second end of said solid piston rod, said piston slidingly engaging said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube to divide a first portion of said sealed working chamber into an upper working chamber and a lower working chamber, said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas;
- a first flow path extending through said piston to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said upper working chamber and said lower working chamber;

a valve body disposed within said sealed working chamber to define with said end cap and with said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube a fluid chamber located in a second portion of said sealed working chamber, said fluid chamber being completely filled with said pressurized gas, said valve body being independent from said solid piston rod and fixedly secured to said inner cylindrical surface of said pressure tube; and

a second flow path extending through said valve body to accommodate flow of said pressurized gas between said lower working chamber and said fluid chamber, said second flow path being a continuously open flow path; wherein

the pressurized ~~[[fluid]]~~ gas is the only biasing member disposed within said upper working chamber.

34. (new) The damper according to Claim 1, wherein the sealed working chamber does not communicate with an external source of pressurized gas.

35. (new) The damper according to Claim 31, wherein the sealed working chamber does not communicate with an external source of pressurized gas.

36. (new) The damper according to Claim 33, wherein the sealed working chamber does not communicate with an external source of pressurized gas.